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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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WHAT IF™ THOR™ AND THE AVENGERS® BATTLED THE GODS?

SIMONS & Rubinstein

FOR THE LOVE OF *JANE FOSTER*--
HE WILL DESTROY THE UNIVERSE!

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STAN LEE PRESENTS: A STUNNING SAGA OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY!

WHAT IF THOR FOUGHT ODIN OVER JANE FOSTER?

I AM *THE WATCHER!* FOR COUNTLESS EONS I HAVE OBSERVED YOUR WORLD AND RECORDED ITS SIGNIFICANT EVENTS. LATELY, I HAVE PEERED INTO ADJACENT REALITIES -- REALMS THAT EMBRACE THE ALTERNATE PATHS YOUR WORLD'S HISTORY *MIGHT* HAVE TAKEN. HEREIN WE SHALL LEARN...

THERE CAME A TIME WHEN *THOR*, ASGARDIAN GOD OF THUNDER, STOOD ON A DESOLATE MOUNTAIN TOP WITH HIS MORTAL BELOVED, *JANE FOSTER*--*

AT LONG LAST, MY FATHER ODIN HATH CONSENTED THAT WE BE WED!

AND SUCH A WEDDING CAN ONLY BE HELD IN ETERNAL ASGARD!

FEAR NOT, JANE -- BUT LET THE VORTEX SURROUND THEE --

STORY: PETER GILLIS

ART: RICH BUCKLER / DAVE SIMONS

LETTERS: ORZ COLORS: GAFF

DENNY O'NEIL and MARK GRUENWALD EDITORS

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*SEEN IN THOR #136.-- D/M.

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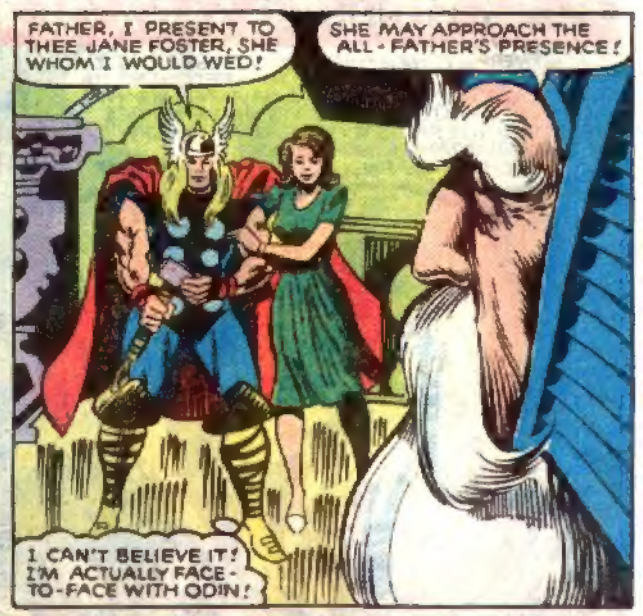
AND IN AN INSTANT, WE ARE THERE!
THE COLORS-- THE SHEER BEAUTY-- IT'S ALMOST UNBEARABLE!


FATHER, I PRESENT TO THEE JANE FOSTER, SHE WHOM I WOULD WED!
SHE MAY APPROACH THE ALL-FATHER'S PRESENCE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I'M ACTUALLY FACE-TO-FACE WITH ODIN!

AND SINCE NONE BUT A GODDESS MAY WED A GOD--

--SHE MUST BE GIVEN NEW RAIMENT!

THOU HAST NOW THE POWER OF UNLIMITED FLIGHT! GO FORTH AND TEST IT!
THIS IS LIKE A DREAM!

AND, AS IN A DREAM, A SUDDEN ATTACK OF DOUBT IN HER POWER CAUSES JANE TO PLUMMET DOWN!
SHE FALLS! SHE WAS NOT READY FOR SUCH A GIFT!

THOR! THANK HEAVEN YOU REACHED ME IN TIME!
MY LOVE, THOU SHOULDST NOT DOUBT THE WORD OF ODIN! IS HE NOT LORD OF ALL ASGARD?

BUT SIRE--THE UNKNOWN IS TOO POWERFUL FOR ANY SAVE THEE! MUST THE FEMALE FACE HIM?
SILENCE! TO PROVE HERSELF WORTHY OF IMMORTALITY,-- TO ATONE FOR HER LACK OF FAITH-- INTO THE CHAMBER SHE MUST GO!
HAVE COURAGE, MY LOVE! THOU MUST FACE THIS LIKE AN IMMORTAL BORN!

FACE? FACE WHAT? THOR-- I'M SCARED!
HAVE THEE FAITH, MY LOVE! THE PRIZE IS WORTH THE RISK!

BUT AS THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER STANDS IN THE STYGIAN CHAMBER WITH THE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MONSTER CALLED ONLY THE UNKNOWN, ALL FAITH FAILS!

HER ONLY REACTION IS--
THOR! HELP ME, MY DARLING!

IMMEDIATELY, THE THUNDER GOD RESPONDS...
BACK, THOU FOUL INHUMAN BRUTE! NONE MAY HARM THE BELOVED OF THOR!

LATER, A JUDGMENT IS PASSED.
IT SEEMS THAT JANE FOSTER HATH SCANT TASTE FOR A GODDESS' LIFE IN ASGARD!
FATHER, I BEG THEE--
NO! DON'T ASK HIM! I WON'T STAY! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE--TOO MAD!

SHE HATH MADE HER OWN CHOICE, MY SON! HER PLACE IS ON EARTH!
NO!!

I HAVE SPOKEN!!

AND A NEW LIFE WAS SET UP BY ODIN FOR JANE FOSTER!
DR. KINCAID, THIS IS NURSE FOSTER -- OUR NEW RESIDENT!
I HOPE YOU WILL BE HAPPY WITH US, NURSE FOSTER!

THE PAIN IN THE THUNDER GOD'S BREAST WAS GREAT-- AND THERE WAS RESENTMENT OVER ODIN'S MANEUVERING!
HOWEVER, WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE GODDESS SIF, THAT PAIN WAS ASSUAGED, AND JANE FOSTER WAS, FOR A TIME, FORGOTTEN!
BUT IN SUCH A CRITICAL MOMENT AS THIS, THERE IS MORE THAN ONE OUTCOME POSSIBLE. WHILE IN THE REALITY YOU HAVE JUST SEEN, THOR STOOD BY IN SHOCKED DISBELIEF AT ODIN'S JUDGMENT...
... IN ANOTHER, HE GIVES VENT TO HIS DISMAY!
HER PLACE IS ON EARTH!
NO!! THIS IS NO FAIR JUDGMENT!
WHAT!! THOU DAREST DEFY THE WILL OF ODIN?!
AYE--! DARE!
THEN BE GONE FROM MY SIGHT-- BOTH OF YE!
THUS THE SPELL MEANT FOR JANE FOSTER IS NOW CAST UPON TWO BEINGS, WITH SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT RESULTS!

MY FATHER HATH SENT US TO EARTH YET IN OUR IMMORTAL IDENTITIES! TRULY MY HEART DOTH BEGIN TO BOIL IN RAGE!
THOR! THIS HOSPITAL -- LOOKS FAMILIAR IN A STRANGE WAY!
AND DR. KINCAID EMERGES FROM HIS OFFICE--!
WHAT ON EARTH -- THOR?!
DWELL NOT UPON IT, MY LOVE--
--FOR THE PERFIDY OF MY FATHER IS NOW BECOME CLEAR!
AND SUCH DEVIOUS TREACHERY AS ODIN PRACTICED ON US CRIES OUT FOR VENGEANCE MOST DIRE! HENCE FLY WE TO GAIN US ALLIES IN THAT VENGEANCE--
--TO THOSE WHOSE VERY NAME MEANS VENGEANCE--
--THE AVENGERS!
THOR! YOU'VE RETURNED AFTER ALL THIS TIME!
AYE, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
AND WOULD THAT I COULD GREET MY FELLOW AVENGERS IN A HAPPIER INSTANCE!
FOR NOW IS MY MOST DESPERATE HOUR--AND I HAVE NEED OF ALL THE AVENGERS!
IN THAT CASE-- WE'LL CONTACT IRON MAN AS WELL!

LATER, WHEN IRON MAN ARRIVES TO COMPLETE THE ROSTER OF THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES **AVENGERS**...

OKAY, THOR. WHAT IS IT?

MY FRIENDS -- THERE IS AN EVIL ABROAD IN ASGARD! A STRANGE FORCE THAT CORRUPTS THE MIND OF MAN AND GOD THREATENS TO OVERWHELM THE REALM OF THE GODS!

I KNOW NOT WHENCE IT CAME, BUT THE MEASURE OF ITS POTENCY IS SO GREAT --

-- THAT IT HATH POSSESSED MY FATHER **ODIN**, LORD OF ASGARD! SO 'TWOULD SEEM I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BATTLE THE ALL-FATHER HIMSELF!

whew! WHEN YOU SAY **DIRE**, YOU AREN'T KIDDING!

I KNOW THIS LIES BEYOND THE AVENGERS' REALM OF RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I WOULD ASK OF YE IN THE NAME OF FRIENDSHIP TO JOIN WITH ME.

WELL, I WILL *NOT* GO!

THOR IS RIGHT! THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US!

PIETRO! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

THOR IS AN AVENGER IN NEED! DOES THAT MEAN NOTHING TO YOU?

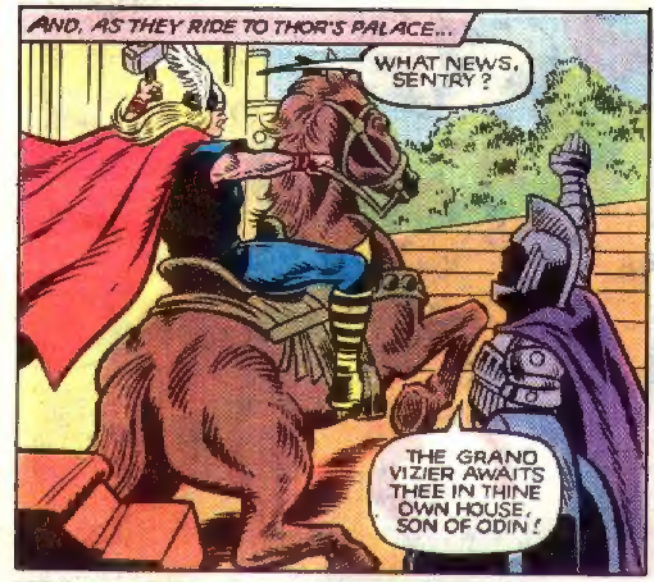
OUR CONCERN IS EARTH, MY SISTER! AND ON EARTH QUICKSILVER STAYS!

FINE, PIETRO! FOR THE REST OF US --

-- OUR CONCERN IS WITH OUR FRIEND!

MEANWHILE, IN ASGARD...
SIRE-- BY THY LEAVE-- MY CONSCIENCE BIDS ME SPEAK.
SPEAK THEN, LOYAL VIZIER! THY CONSCIENCE HATH EVER BEEN WISE AND TRUE!
THEN I MUST SAY I FEEL THOU WERE UNFAIR TO THE MORTAL JANE! NO BEING WOULD HAVE DESIRED THE ASGARD THOU SHOWED HER!
HAVE A CARE, AGED ONE!
KNOW THOU THAT ODIN HATH NOT DONE WHAT HE HATH DONE WITHOUT HIS REASONS!
THEN, SIRE, KNOW THOU THAT WHAT I NOW DO, I DO WITH REASONS OF MINE OWN.
THEN DO WHAT THOU MUST--AND QUICK, LEST MINE IRE SMITE THEE!
AND SO I MUST LEAVE THE SIDE OF ODIN AND TAKE THE SIDE OF HIS SON.
HE SHALL HAVE NEED OF ME.
FOR, THOUGH HE HATH THE RIGHT OF THIS, MUCH GRIEVOUS WRONG SHALL THIS QUARREL BREED! I ONLY HOPE I CAN PREVENT IT FROM DESTROYING HIM!
LO! THE VIZIER QUITS THE PALACE IMPERIAL!
AND HE ENTERS THE PALACE OF THOR!
WHAT CAN IT MEAN?

SOON, OUTSIDE ASGARD...
THE VORTEX HAS CEASED! WE'VE ARRIVED ON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!
FOR ONCE I'M SPEECHLESS! THIS IS ALMOST AS IMPRESSIVE AS DISNEYLAND!
HAIL HEIMDALL, GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!
I HAVE NO GREETING FOR THE SON OF ODIN!
WHAT DOST THOU MEAN? IF THOU INTEND TO BAR OUR PATH TO ASGARD--
NAY, GOD OF THUNDER--
--YE MAY PASS.
YET I CAN HAVE NO GREETING FOR ONE WHO BRINGS DOOM AND DEATH TO THE REALM ETERNAL.
IT GRIEVES ME TO HEAR SUCH SPEECH--
--FOR I BRING NAUGHT BUT A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE.
NOW, AVENGERS, LET US MOUNT THE HORSES LEFT BY MY RETAINERS FOR US--
--AND SO TO THE GATES OF ASGARD!


AND, AS THEY RIDE TO THOR'S PALACE...
WHAT NEWS, SENTRY?
THE GRAND VIZIER AWAITS THEE IN THINE OWN HOUSE, SON OF ODIN!

VIZIER! THIS IS HOPE UNLOOKED-FOR IN THIS DREAD HOUR!
DOST THOU TAKE MY SIDE IN THIS BATTLE?
AYE, THOR--

--THOUGH BATTLE I WISH IT WERE NOT.
BUT ODIN WILL LISTEN TO NAUGHT BUT FORCE NOW... AND IT IS FORCE HE SHALL BEAR THE BRUNT OF!
I FEAR SO.

MUCH OF ASGARD HAS JOINED THY CAMP. THY CAUSE HATH STIRRED THEIR HEARTS.
HAIL THOR!
HAIL JANE FOSTER!

MEANWHILE...
THOR RAISES WAR AGAINST ME -- AND THE VIZIER PROTECTS HIM! NOW DOTH ODIN REQUIRE A WEAPON AGAINST HIS SON!
AND AGAINST ONE SON -- WHAT BETTER WEAPON THAN ANOTHER?

THUS DO I RETURN THEE, LOKI, GOD OF MISCHIEF, FROM THINE UTTERMOST EXILE!
SO, ODIN, THOU HAST FINALLY SEEN THAT LOKI WAS E'ER THY FAITHFUL SERVANT!

SILENCE, BASE ONE! YET ODIN HATH A TASK FOR THEE!
LOKI IS -- ALL EARS, MY LORD!

WHY NOT?

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Denny and Mark,

WHAT IF #21 stands as another enjoyable issue. Once again, you've managed to take a real intriguing idea and ram it home forcefully. Writer Bill Mantlo did a superb job with his first WHAT-IF. The story demonstrated what to me is one of the purposes of this book: to show us things we can't possibly see in any other comic. In this case, we get two heroes (Reed and Johnny) who act like villains and a villain (Krang) acting like a hero. Now that's a way to use the format!

Roy Veldboom
RR#1
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

We try Roy, we try. The subject of the personality perturbations in WHAT IF #21 was one of the main bones of contention in our mail. Here's a letter to represent the negative side...

Dear Dennis and Mark,

The sequel to WHAT IF #1 was absolutely shocking. In all my fourteen years of being alive I have never seen anything so sickening as Reed Richards' hatred and prejudice against Prince Namor because Namor won the love of Sue Storm. It seems to me that nothing short of a lobotomy would have made Reed act so irrational and illogical. It also seems strange to see Torch and Spider-Man fight when "almost a year ago" Storm and Parker were best of friends. But, I guess since this is an alternate reality you guys can do anything with your characters. I must admit, though, I was quite pleased with the resolution of the story. Let's see another sequel soon!

Perry Der
844 SW Second St
Hallandale, FL 33009

Well, Perry, I guess you couldn't have hated the story that much if you still want to see a sequel. We do appreciate you expressing your opinion. For the record, though, we can't do just anything with our characters in our alternate reality sagas, because despite the divergent events that they live through, they're still the characters you know and love — not mere other-worldly shadows with the same names. Our next correspondent expands upon this point...

Dear Folks

An aspect of the "What If" concept that hadn't been explored to anywhere near its full potential was that of familiar Marvel personalities being influenced and shaken, by traumatic crises. WHAT IF usually portrays characters as acting as they would in the mainstream reality, only in response to different events. WHAT IF #21 was different. It was great to see Reed and the Torch falling prey to their own human frailties and the capacity for evil that exists within us all. Warlord Krang's nobility was also an excellent touch. I feel much sorrier for him knowing that he was a valiant man who was driven to villainy for the love of Dorma. This motivation could not be developed as graphically in our universe.

Perhaps what I liked best about the story was the knowledge I gained that somewhere the Sub-Mariner is happy. He's always been my favorite character and I've been torn over the years to see him endure such unearned suffering. Facing a life without Susan beside me" he says to Reed, "I might have taken equally desperate steps as Reed did to regain Sue. Yet as we have seen in FANTASTIC FOUR, he did not. He gallantly stepped aside and later even conspired to save Reed's marriage. Truly a noble character is Namor and as we have learned here perhaps even nobler than Reed Richards. A guy like that deserves his own book.

John Kooser
Allegheny College
Meadville, PA 16335

We agree, John, and as we have mentioned elsewhere, a new SUB-MARINER series is in the works, but when it appears is anybody's guess since we're taking our time to make it extra special. And now for something completely different...

Dear Marvel

WHAT IF generally gives me great reading pleasure because it allows your writers to really stretch their imagination. The best stories in WHAT IF are the ones which show something new: the worst stories are those where everything turns out much the same despite the new circumstances. These kinds of tale have always struck me as copouts for writers who couldn't think of any other way to end a story.

Speaking of something new, what I would really like to see is a tale where the heroes were soundly defeated. WHAT IF is probably the only title where this could happen. In other titles, all stories end in victory, a tie, or escape. The villains never seem to win. Sometimes I wonder why they keep trying.

Steven Cote
45 Lumae St
Springfield, MA 01119

Interesting point of view, Steven... not one I'd particularly agree with, though. Marvel heroes never have an easy time of vanquishing the villains, and in many cases, the margin of victory is so slim that it is difficult to actually call it a victory. But it is true that no Marvel hero has been beat so badly that he decided to toss in the towel. Maybe we'll explore that theme here in the future, okay?

—mark

HOW ABOUT?

WHAT IF... Alicia Masters became the Thing?
WHAT IF... Someone else than Rick Jones had gotten the Nega bands and become Captain Marvel's alter ego?
WHAT IF... Tony Stark hadn't given up alcohol?
WHAT IF... The Beast had remained an X-Man?
—Stanley Sanders
Floydada, TX

WHAT IF... Ted Sallis had become the Super Soldier rather than the Man-Thing?
—Ernest Karbe
Glen Burnie, MD

WHAT IF... Conan was unable to return to his own time in WHAT IF #13?
—Griff Mauser
Jacksonville, TX

WHAT IF... all of Marvel's robots (Vision, Machine Man, Rom) formed a team?
WHAT IF... Galactus had taken both Norrin Radd and Shalla Bal as heralds?
—Kevin Sands
Baltimore, MD

WHAT IF... Captain America had been revived by the Guardians of the Galaxy instead of the Avengers?
WHAT IF... Flash Thompson knew Peter Parker was Spider-Man?
WHAT IF... Doctor Octopus had married Aunt May?
WHAT IF... Lady Dorma had lived?
—Billy Cox
Bronx, NY

WHAT IF... the original Human Torch became an Avenger instead of the Vision?
WHAT IF... Clea was raised by Umar and Dormammu?
WHAT IF... the Valkyrie had remained loyal to the Enchantress?
WHAT IF... Moondragon was chosen as the Celestial Madonna instead of Mantis?
WHAT IF... the Human Torch had married Crystal?
WHAT IF... The Cat never became Tigra?
WHAT IF... the Black Widow remained loyal to Russia?
—Wilson Rivera
Brooklyn, NY

WHAT IF... Peter Parker married Jessica Drew?
—Mike Steffancin
Plainville, OH

WHAT IF... the Avengers had not been resurrected after their battle with Korvac?
WHAT IF... Captain Britain had chosen the sword instead of the amulet?
—Christopher R. Kraeg
Bradenton, FL

WHAT IF... Captain America had died instead of Bucky?
WHAT IF... the Vision had succeeded in his original mission to destroy the Avengers?
WHAT IF... the Beast had stayed with the X-Men?
—Louis Paiz
Key West, FL

WHAT IF... the Wasp had become Giant Woman?
WHAT IF... Mangog had succeeded in pulling the Odinsword?
—Peter Garcia
Puerto Rico

WHAT IF... Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch discovered their father was Magneto?
—Mike Rabara
Livermore, CA

WHAT IF... Reed Richards had taken those different crew members in FF #12?
—J. Vick
(No address on letter)

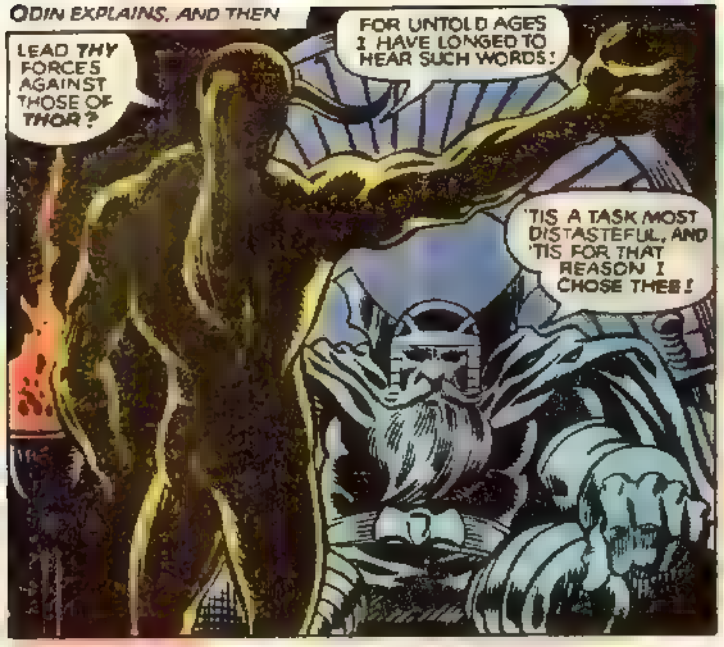
WHAT IF... all the dead super-heroes came back from the grave?
—Ernie Laszlo
Vancouver, WA

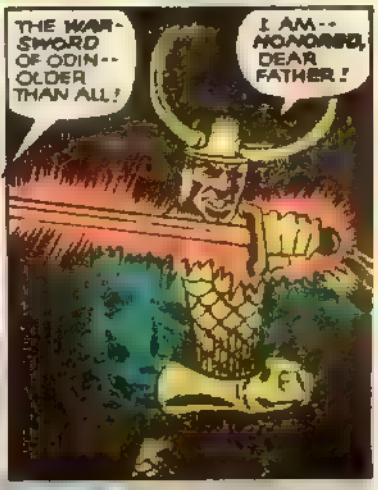
WHAT IF... Wolverine had killed Dark Phoenix?
WHAT IF... Doctor Doom had conquered the world?
WHAT IF... Marvel-Earth heroes came to our world? **(Who would they fight? The Ayatollah? —mg)**
WHAT IF... Sue Storm left the FF to become an Avenger?
—Richard Cook
Nashville, TN

WHAT IF... Vision and Scarlet Witch had a child?
—Karen Marchy
Brooklyn, NY

WHAT IF... Peter Parker's parents were still alive?
Rich Breckenridge
Apple Valley, MN

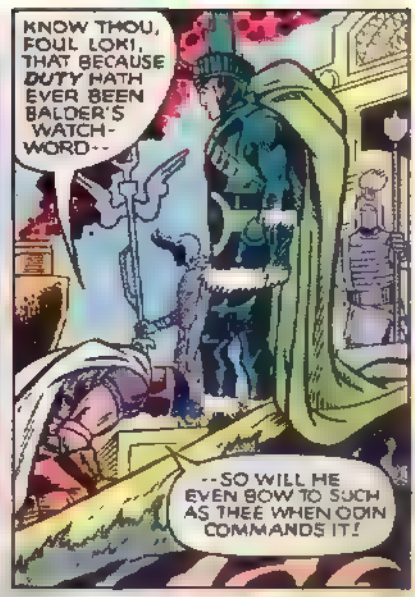
ODIN EXPLAINS, AND THEN

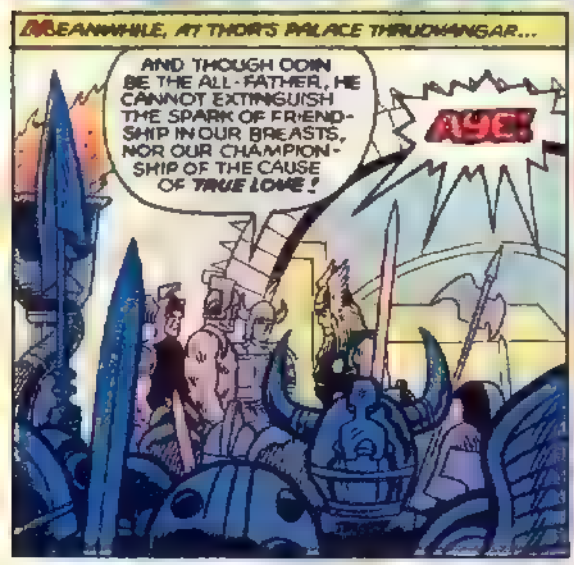




LATER..
BALDER THE BRAVE, STEP FORTH!
WHAT WILLS MY LIEGE?

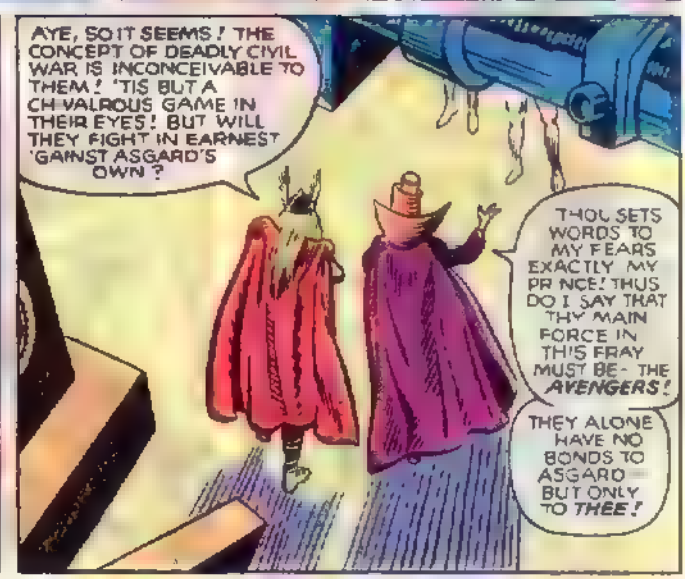
MY CAPTAIN 'GAINST THE REBELLIOUS THOR IS MY SON LOKI. PLEDGE THOU HIM THY SERVICE!
DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED, OLD FRIEND! IT ILL BECOMES THEE


KNOW THOU, FOUL LOKI, THAT BECAUSE DUTY HATH EVER BEEN BALDER'S WATCH-WORD--
--SO WILL HE EVEN BOW TO SUCH AS THEE WHEN ODIN COMMANDS IT!


MEANWHILE, AT THOR'S PALACE THRUDHANGAR...
AND THOUGH ODIN BE THE ALL-FATHER, HE CANNOT EXTINGUISH THE SPARK OF FRIENDSHIP IN OUR BREASTS, NOR OUR CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE CAUSE OF TRUE LOVE!
AYE!

AND SO WE PLEDGE OUR IMMORTAL LIVES AND HONOR TO PROTECT THE LOVELY JANE FOSTER!
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY! THANK YOU!

WHAT TROUBLES THY VISAGE, VIZIER? IS SOMETHING AMISS?
METHINKS THE ASGARDIANS TAKE THIS ALL TOO LIGHTLY, THOR!


AYE, SO IT SEEMS! THE CONCEPT OF DEADLY CIVIL WAR IS INCONCEIVABLE TO THEM! 'TIS BUT A CHIVALROUS GAME IN THEIR EYES! BUT WILL THEY FIGHT IN EARNEST 'GAINST ASGARD'S OWN?
THOU SETS WORDS TO MY FEARS EXACTLY MY PRINCE! THUS DO I SAY THAT THY MAIN FORCE IN THIS FRAY MUST BE - THE AVENGERS!
THEY ALONE HAVE NO BONDS TO ASGARD - BUT ONLY TO THEE!

BUT, POWERFUL THOUGH THEY BE, THE AVENGERS ARE BUT MORTALS! FOR THEM TO BE THE VANGUARD OF THE ASSAULT--!
AH, BUT I CAN IMPROVE THEIR LOT, THOR!

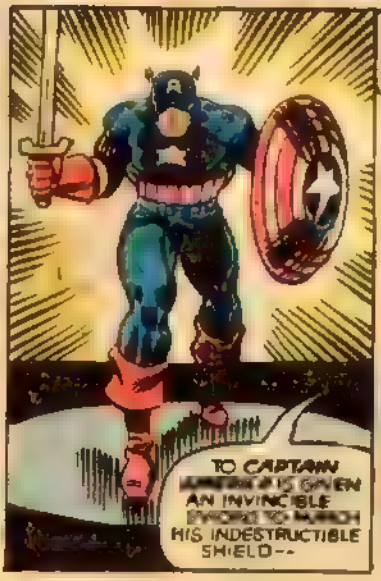
FOR THE SECRET LORE OF ANCIENT ASGARD IS MINE!
AND SUCH IS THAT HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE THAT IT CAN CONFER POWER UPON THOSE THAT ARE WORTHY.
AVENGERS, STEP FORTH!

FOR IRON MAN-- HIS ARMOR SHALL BE POWERED BY- AND PROOF AGAINST--ASGARDIAN SORCERY!

FOR THE SCARLET WITCH, HER HEX POWER SHALL BE LIKEWISE AUGMENTED BY MAGIC!

TO HAWKEYE IS GIVEN A GODLY BOW THAT CAN NEVER MISS!
IT NEVER DOES ANY-WAY, YOU OLD WIND-BAG!

TO GOLIATH IS GIVEN THINE OWN BELT OF STRENGTH, THAT HE MAY ATTAIN ANY SIZE WITHOUT WEAKENING!


TO CAPTAIN AMERICA IS GIVEN AN INVINCIBLE SWORD TO MATCH HIS INDESTRUCTIBLE SHIELD--

--AND THE WASP'S STING SHALL NOW BE EFFECTIVE EVEN AGAINST THE GODS!

NOW LET OUR CRY RING OUT THAT THE HALLS OF ASGARD MIGHT EVER REMEMBER IT--

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

BUT IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE, A FAR LESS EXUBERANT SCENE NOW TRANSPIRES

BALDER! THE RUMOR MONGERS SAY THAT THOU GOEST INTO BATTLE AGAINST THY FRIEND THOR! SAY IT IS NOT SO!

THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH, FAIR SIF!

THOU WILT FIGHT-- EVEN WHEN THOU KNOWEST THE LOVE I HAVE BORNE SO SECRETLY FOR HIM!

THINKEST THOU THAT MY HEART BREAKS ANY LESS, MY LADY?

AND YET THOU STILL WILT DO IT! STILL!

BALDER STILL SHALL DO-- WHAT BALDER MUST, MY LADY!

LATER, AT THE GATES OF THOR'S CASTLE...

OPEN!

OPEN IN THE NAME OF IMPERIAL ODIN!

SUCH AS THEE CAN STAND WITHOUT AND SAY THY PIECE, EXECUTIONER!

VERY WELL, LITTLE MAN--

"--KNOW YE ALL THAT THE TRAITOR THOR AND ALL WHO STAND BY HIM ARE NOW UNDER THE BAN IMPERIAL, UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS THEY DO SURRENDER THEMSELVES UP TO THE ALL-FATHER FOR JUDGMENT!"
WHAT SAYEST THOU TO THAT, HOGUN THE HALF-WITTED?
I SAY THAT THOU ART A BALD-PATED LOUT AND I'LL SEE THY BLACK BLOOD ON MY MACE!
WE SHALL SEE WHOSE BLOOD IS BLACKEST, DOOMED ONE!
THE EXECUTIONER WILL REMEMBER THY WORDS!
WARRIORS! THE GAUNTLET HAS BEEN CAST DOWN--THE CHALLENGE MADE!
DO WE STAND WITH ODIN AND LOKI -- OR THOR AND JANE FOSTER?
YOU KNOW, MY DARLING, WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE, ASGARD DOESN'T SEEM SO INSANE AFTER ALL!
IT COULD EVEN TURN A GIRL'S HEAD!
FOR THOR AND JANE--AND HONOR ETERNAL!

AND THEN THE BATTLE JOINS! THE LAND GROANS WITH THE CLASH OF ARMS, AS POWER HURTLES AGAINST POWER, SWORD RINGS ON SHIELD AND THE GOLDEN REALM BECOMES ONE TERRIBLE PANORAMA OF DESTRUCTION!

DESIST, MORTAL! THOU CANNOT MATCH MY SKILL!

BULL! A 'KINDRED SPIRIT' DOESN'T TURN ON HIS FRIEND!

THOU, A MORTAL, DARES JUDGE A GOD?

YOU'RE NO PIKER, I'LL SAY THAT!

I SENSE A KINDRED SPIRIT IN YOU! WE SHOULD NOT BATTLE!

YES, I DARE! THOR TOLD ME YOU WERE HIS FRIEND! LOYAL BALDER! AND YOU SOLD HIM OUT!

THOU LIEST, MORTAL!

MORTALS! IT IS THE MORTALS THAT HAVE DRIVEN THOR MAD!

AND SO YOU MUST BE DESTROYED!

GOOD LORD! I CAN'T FIGHT SUCH POWER!

CAP! NO! HE'LL BE KILLED!

KRAK

GOOD TIMING, WANDA!

AND, FAR FROM THE CARNAGE ALONG THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, WE FIND-

THE MORTAL JANE!

HEIMDALL! HAS THE WORLD GONE CRAZY? THEY'RE KILLING EACH OTHER -- AND BECAUSE OF ME!

AND THOU DOST NOT BELIEVE THAT LOVE IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR?

BUT WHY? WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LET LOVE BE? I HAD SUCH LITTLE DREAMS FOR THOR AND ME -- JUST THAT WE COULD BE TOGETHER! AND NOW THIS --!

BUT ODIN HATH HIS DREAMS AS WELL, MILADY!

I - I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND --

THOU HAST NOT LEARNED WHAT NIGHTMARES MAY BE BORN -- WHEN DREAMS CONFLICT!

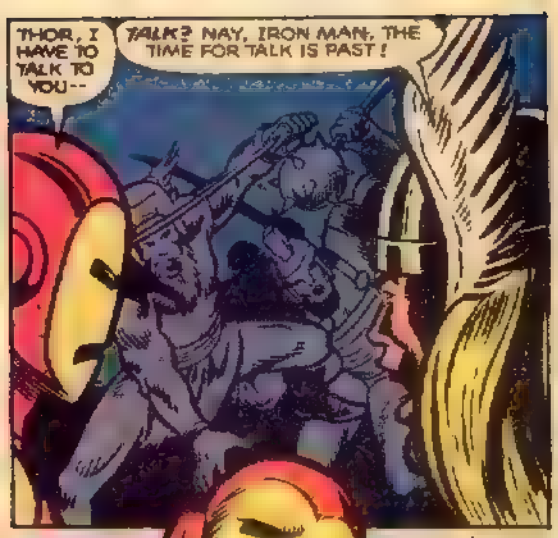
BUT STAY BY ME -- AND WE MAY SEE WHAT LIGHT MAY YET COME OUT OF THE DARK STORM OF WAR!

BUT DEEP IN THAT STORM, THERE IS LITTLE BUT THE SOUND OF THUNDER!

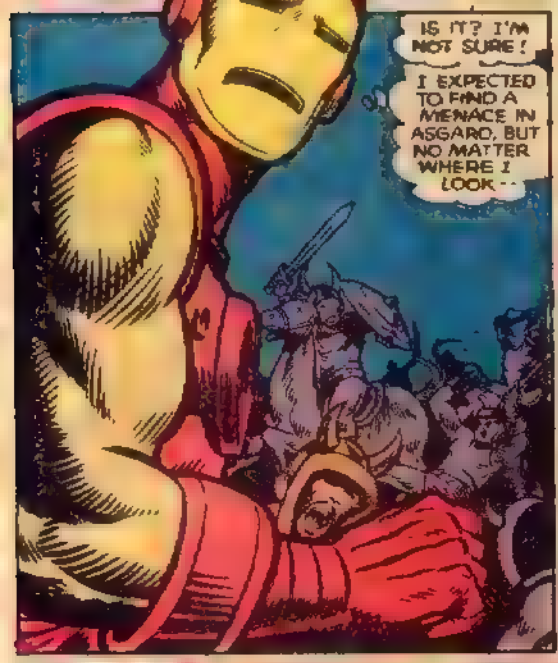
I'VE NEVER SEEN THOR LIKE THIS! NEVER!

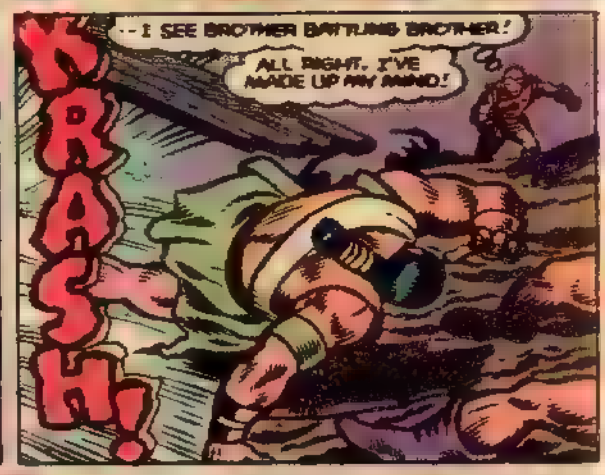
BACK, YE TRAITORS! BACK, BEFORE THE WRATH OF THOR!

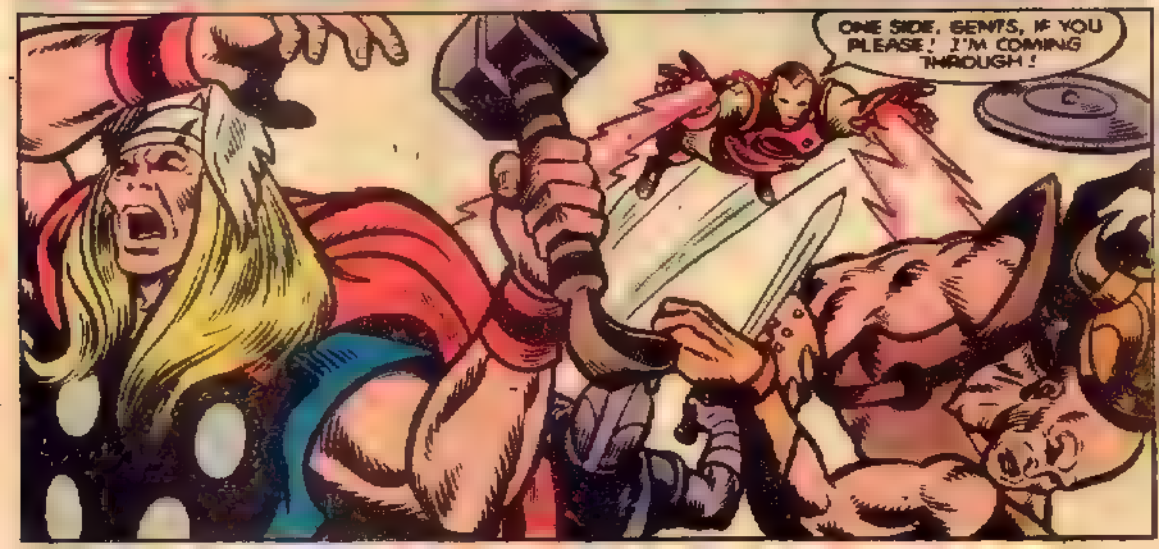
PRESS THE ATTACK! THE FORCES OF ODIN MUST BE ALLOWED NO RESPITE!

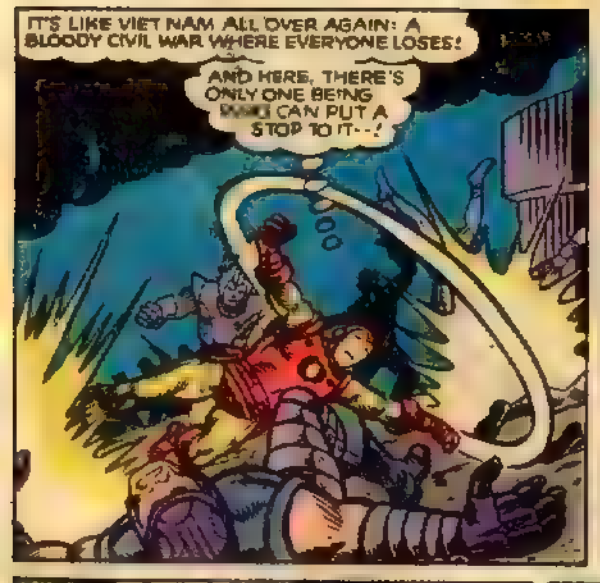

THOR, I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU--
TALK? NAY, IRON MAN, THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST!

'TIS TIME FOR ACTION!

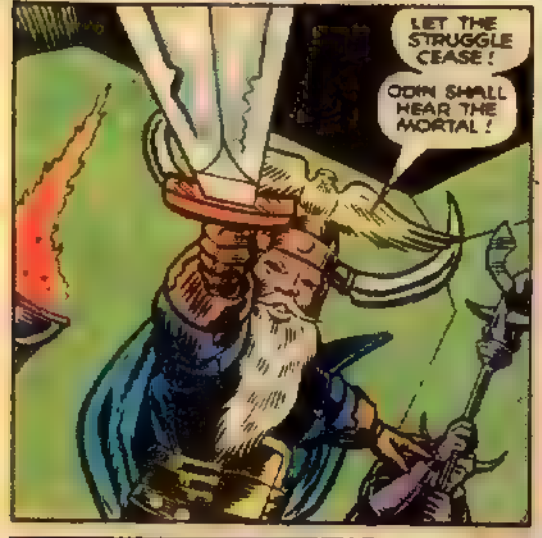

IS IT? I'M NOT SURE!
I EXPECTED TO FIND A MENACE IN ASGARD, BUT NO MATTER WHERE I LOOK--

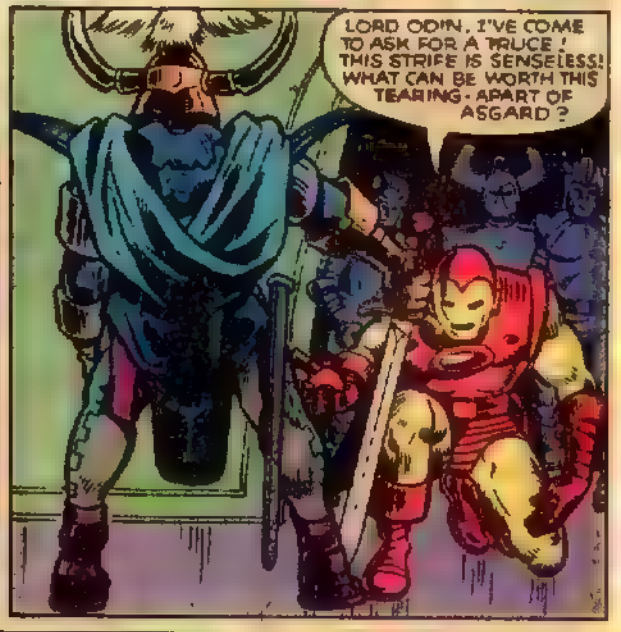

--I SEE BROTHER BATTLING BROTHER!
ALL RIGHT, I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!
KRASH!


ONE SIDE, GENTS, IF YOU PLEASE! I'M COMING THROUGH!


IT'S LIKE VIET NAM ALL OVER AGAIN: A BLOODY CIVIL WAR WHERE EVERYONE LOSES!
AND HERE, THERE'S ONLY ONE BEING WHO CAN PUT A STOP TO IT--!

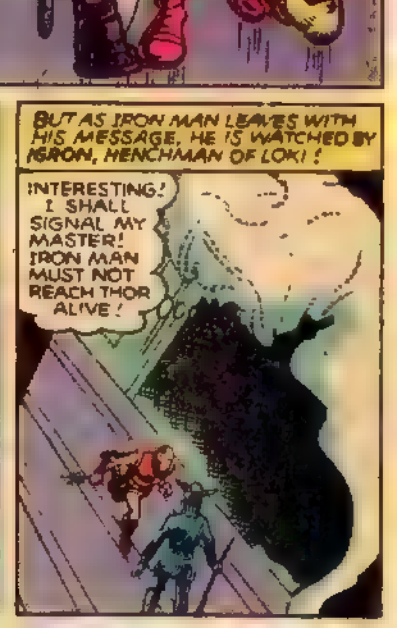
LORD ODIN! I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU NOW!
YOUR PARDON ALL FATHER! HE FIGHTS LIKE A DEMON!

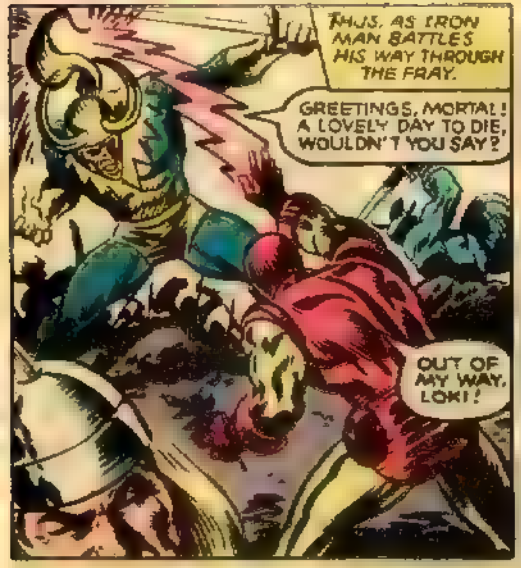

LET THE STRUGGLE CEASE!
ODIN SHALL HEAR THE MORTAL!

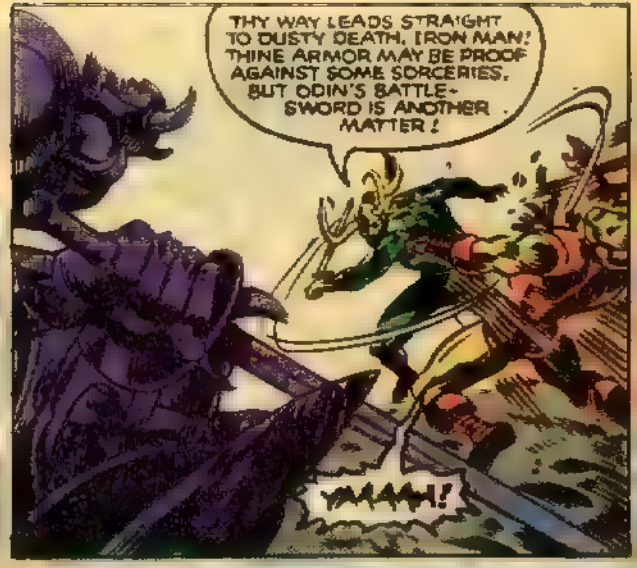

LORD ODIN, I'VE COME TO ASK FOR A TRUCE! THIS STRIFE IS SENSELESS! WHAT CAN BE WORTH THIS TEARING-APART OF ASGARD?

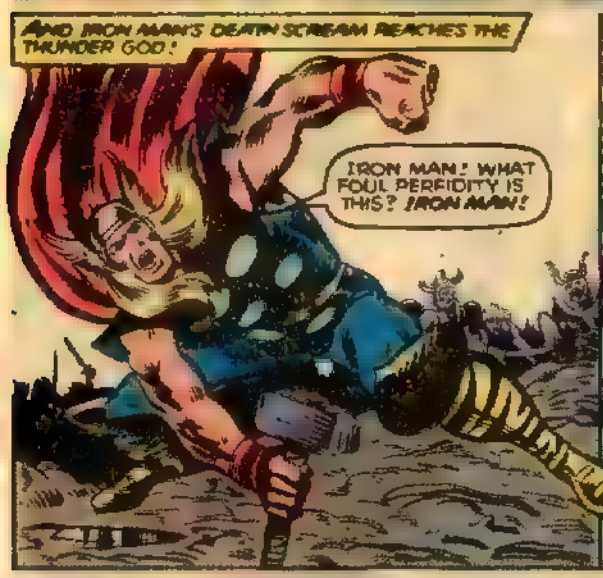
THOR IS YOUR SON! AT LEAST TALK TO HIM!
AYE -- HE IS MY SON.

VERY WELL. I SHALL GIVE THEE THE OLIVE BRANCH OF PEACE. GO TO MY SON AND TELL HIM I WISH TO TALK WITH HIM.
THANK YOU. YOU WON'T REGRET THIS.

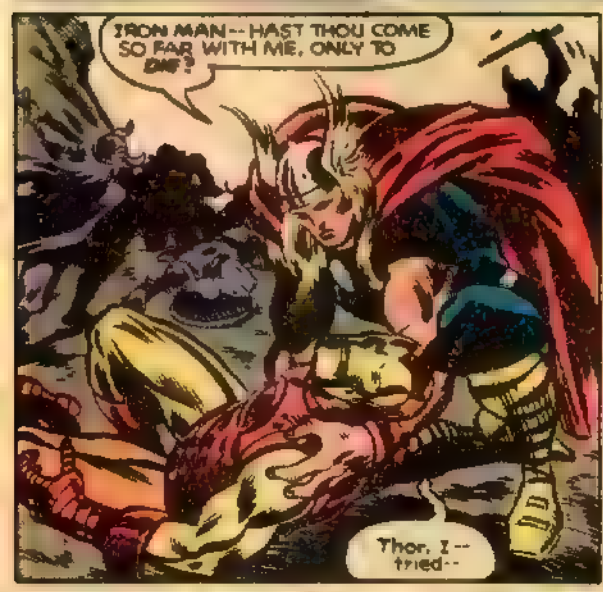

BUT AS IRON MAN LEAVES WITH HIS MESSAGE, HE IS WATCHED BY IGRON, HENCHMAN OF LOKI!
INTERESTING! I SHALL SIGNAL MY MASTER! IRON MAN MUST NOT REACH THOR ALIVE!


THUS, AS IRON MAN BATTLES HIS WAY THROUGH THE FRAY.
GREETINGS, MORTAL! A LOVELY DAY TO DIE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
OUT OF MY WAY, LOKI!


THY WAY LEADS STRAIGHT TO DUSTY DEATH, IRON MAN! THINE ARMOR MAY BE PROOF AGAINST SOME SORCERIES, BUT ODIN'S BATTLE-SWORD IS ANOTHER MATTER!
YAAAH!

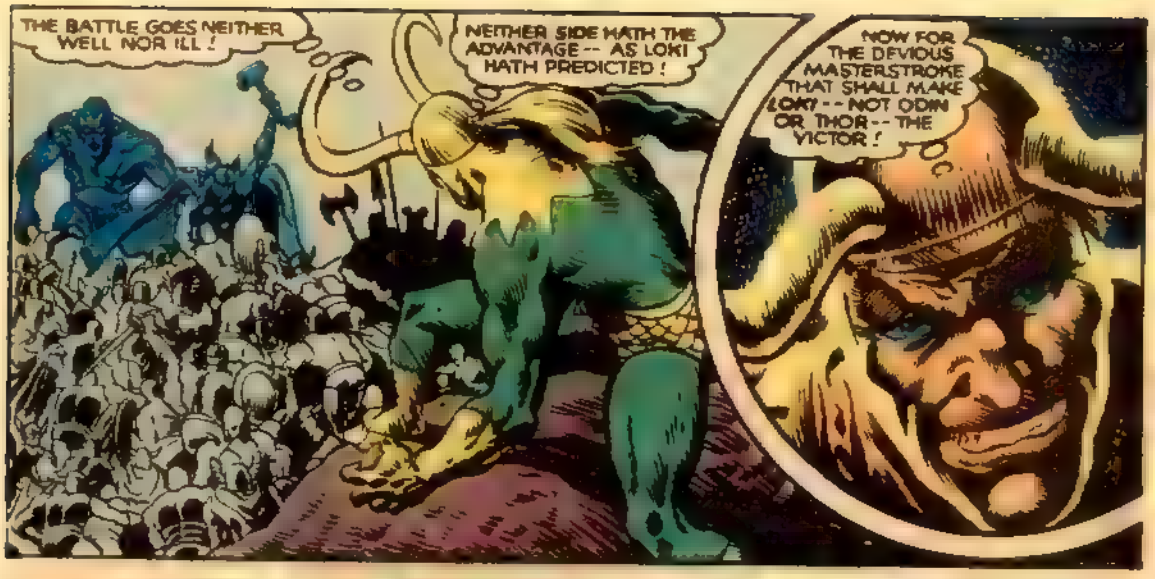

AND IRON MAN'S DEATH SCREAM REACHES THE THUNDER GOD!
IRON MAN! WHAT FOUL PERFIDITY IS THIS? IRON MAN!

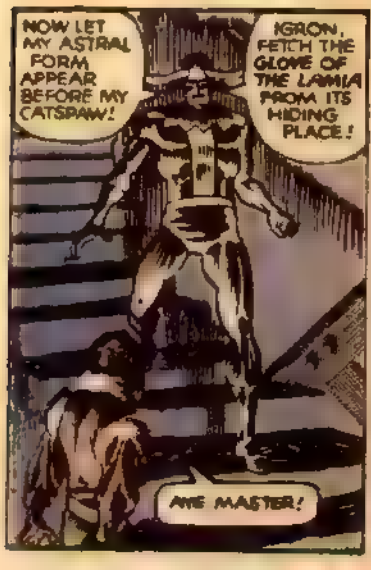
BEGONE, RABBLE! HINDER ME NOT!
WHROOM!


IRON MAN--HAST THOU COME SO FAR WITH ME, ONLY TO DIE?
Thor, I--tried--

-your father--!
THE BRANCH OF TRUCE FALLS UNNOTICED.
MY--FATHER!

AND, IN ODIN'S PALACE
SEE, LORD ODIN! SEE HOW THE MESSAGE OF TRUCE HATH ENRAGED THY FAITHLESS SON! HE SEEKS NAUGHT BUT THY DESTRUCTION!
I HAD NOT BELIEVED IT, IGRON, HADST THOU NOT SHOWN IT UNTO ME!
I HAVE SEEN THE HATE THAT TWISTETH MY SON'S FACE -- SO BE IT! WITH HATE IT SHALL BE COUNTERED FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD!
Y'KNOW, FANDRAL, FOR A TWO BIT ERROLL FLYNN, I LIKE YOUR STYLE! WE SHOULD DO THIS MORE OFTEN!
AYE! THOU ART A GOOD COMPANION, HAWKEYE -- FOR A BOWMAN!
SO, THOU OVERGROWN WEAKLING -- WE MEET AGAIN!
I'VE GOTTEN MIGHTY TIRED OF THAT SMUG TONE IN YOUR VOICE AFTER ALL THIS TIME, EXECUTIONER --
-- SO I THINK I'LL 'OVERGROW' JUST A TRIFLE MORE --
-- AND SHOW YOU JUST WHAT A BELT OF STRENGTH CAN DO TO END YOUR ASGARDIAN ADVANTAGE!
PLEASANT DREAMS!


THE BATTLE GOES NEITHER WELL NOR ILL!
NEITHER SIDE HATH THE ADVANTAGE -- AS LOKI HATH PREDICTED!
NOW FOR THE DEVIOUS MASTERSTROKE THAT SHALL MAKE LOKI -- NOT ODIN OR THOR -- THE VICTOR!


NOW LET MY ASTRAL FORM APPEAR BEFORE MY CATSPAW!
IGRON, FETCH THE GLOVE OF THE LAMIA FROM ITS HIDING PLACE!
AYE MASTER!

IN HIS FRETFUL STATE, ODIN SHALT NOTICE NOTHING OF THE GLOVE'S EFFECTS!
AYE! NOW HIE THEE BACK TO HIM!

HOW FARES THE FIGHTING, IGRON?
MIDDLING WELL, LORD ODIN, BUT--
--I AM UNEASY AT THE THOUGHT OF LOKI LEADING THINE ARMY!

COULD IT NOT BE BALDER TO LEAD? LOKI IS, FORGIVE ME, BARREN OF HONOR.
SO HE IS
AND FOR THAT REASON NONE BUT HE CAN LEAD THIS DISHONORABLE WAR

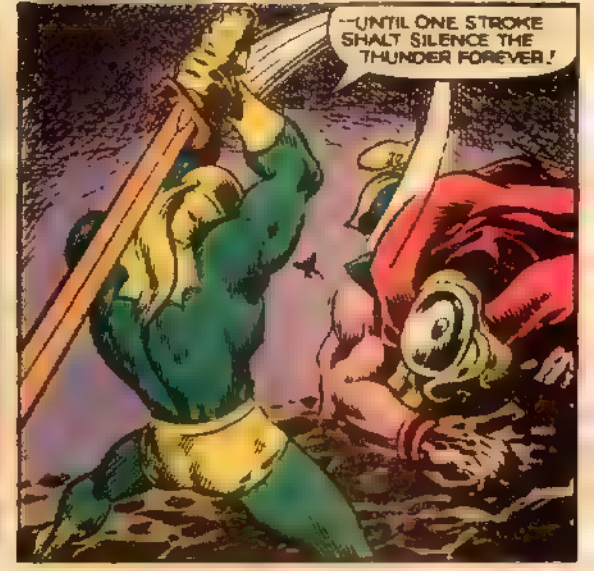
AHH! AND AS IGRON'S GLOVE TOUCHES ODIN--
--SO DOES MY GLOVE FILL ME WITH THE ODIN-POWER!

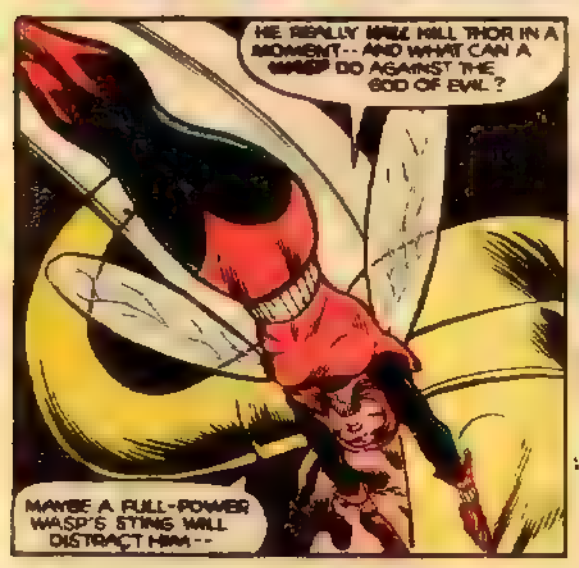
AND NOW--- LET THE GOD OF THUNDER BEWARE!!

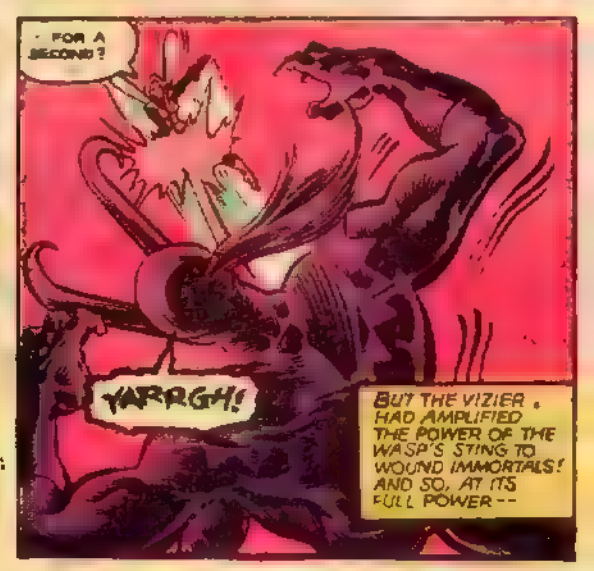
THE TIME IS COME, HALF-BROTHER! AND THY DEATH-SONG IS IN THE AIR!
STAND ASIDE, CHURL!
TODAY, I CARE NOT ONE WHIT ABOUT THEE OR THINE EVIL! 'TIS ODIN I WANT!
THUNDER GOD, THOU ART A FOOL!
HE WHO FEARETH NOT LOKI IS MAD--OR DEAD!
AND THOU SHALT BE BOTH!
NAY! NO WOUND THOU GIVEST CAN EVER MATCH THAT OF ODIN'S--NO TREACHERY EQUAL HIS!
THOUGH THOU BEAREST ODIN'S BATTLE SWORD, THOU ART NOT OF INTEREST!
I BEAR MORE THAN THAT, FOOL! THOU FIGHTEST WITH THAT HATE BORN OF LOVE. FAUGH!
WHILE I, WHO NOW CAN NOW KNOCK THY HAMMER FROM THY GRASP--
NAY! IT CANNOT BE!
--MINE IS THE HATE BORN OF WILL TO POWER!

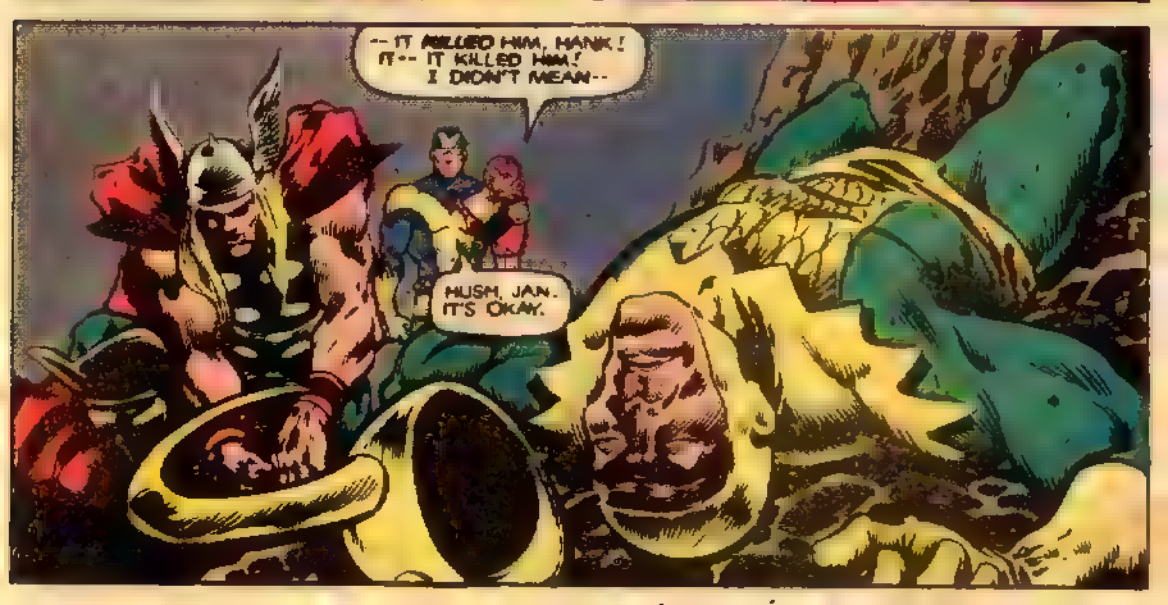
THE POWER THAT SHALL NOW KILL THEE!
NEVER! THOU WILT NOT DEPRIVE ME OF MY VENGEANCE!
THEN ALL WORDS ARE LOST, AS THE MIGHT OF THE THUNDER AND THE ODIN-POWER MEET HEAD ON!
BY THE NORNS!
AVERT YOUR EYES, LEST VER BLINDED!
THOUGH THE POWER NOW BE THINE --
THE SKILL -- AND THE CAUSE -- BE THOR'S!
SPEAK NOT TO ME OF CAUSES, BROTHER!
AYE SPEAK NOTHING -- EVER AGAIN!

WHAT? THOU SEEKEST TO RISE?
THEN, LET EVER MORE ODIN-POWER ENTER INTO ME--

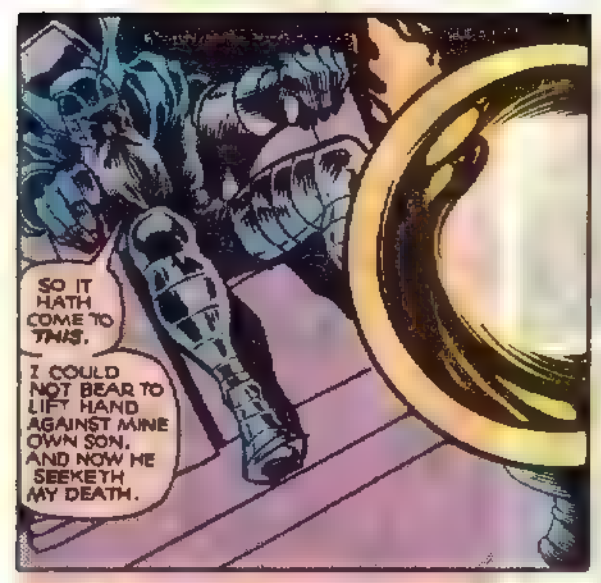

--UNTIL ONE STROKE SHALT SILENCE THE THUNDER FOREVER!

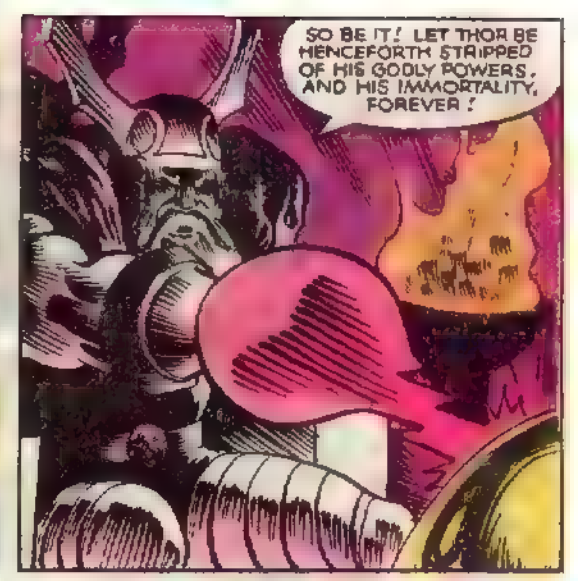

HE REALLY WILL KILL THOR IN A MOMENT-- AND WHAT CAN A WASP DO AGAINST THE GOD OF EVIL?
MAYBE A FULL-POWER WASP'S STING WILL DISTRACT HIM--


- FOR A SECOND?
YARRGH!
BUT THE VIZIER HAD AMPLIFIED THE POWER OF THE WASP'S STING TO WOUND IMMORTALS! AND SO, AT ITS FULL POWER--

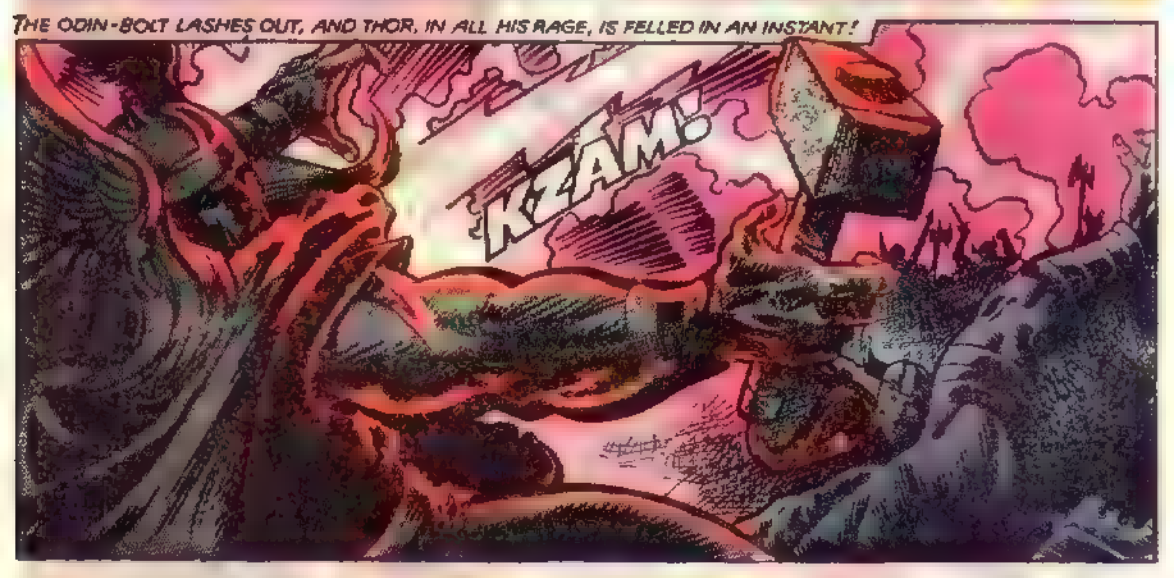

--IT KILLED HIM, HANK! IT-- IT KILLED HIM! I DIDN'T MEAN--
HUSH, JAN. IT'S OKAY.

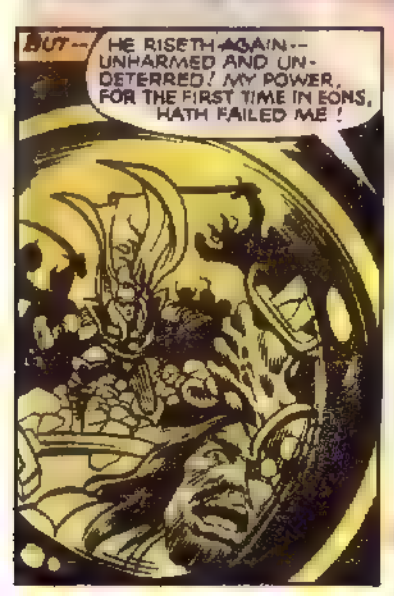
MY BROTHER -- IS DEAD.
ODIN MUST DIE!
FATHER, HEAR ME!
FOR THY TREACHERY -- AND BY THE BLOOD OF IRON MAN AND LOKI, I SWEAR ...
AND, BY THE HORDES OF HELA, NOTHING SHALL STOP ME NOW!
IN BLIND FURY, THE SON OF ODIN SMASHES THE GATES TO THE PALACE IMPERIAL!
SHRAK!

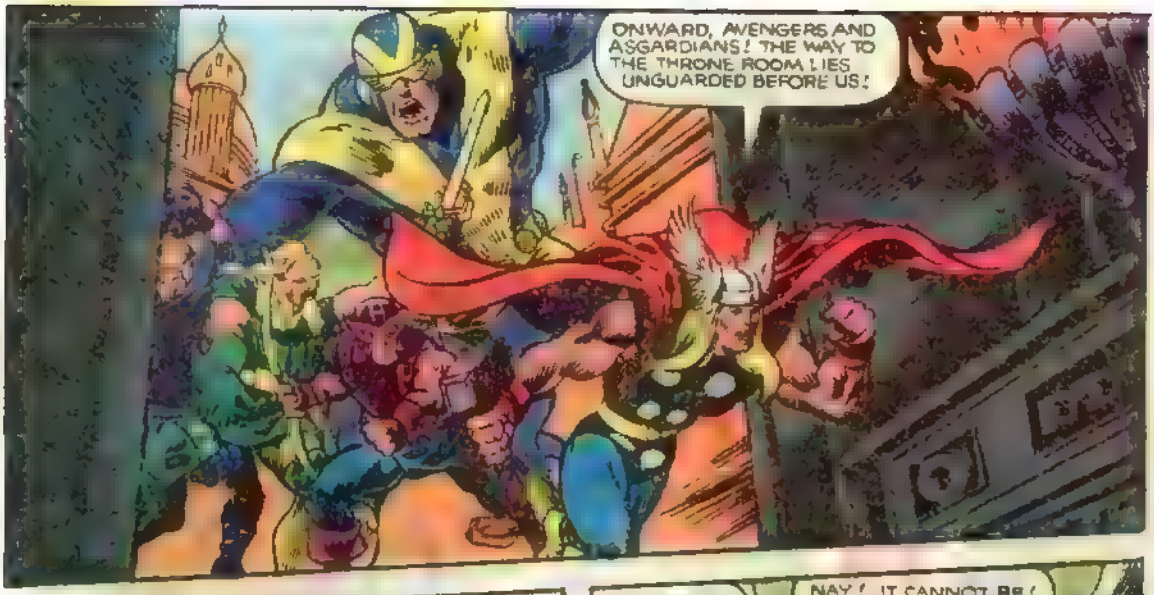




THE ODIN-BOLT LASHES OUT, AND THOR, IN ALL HIS RAGE, IS FELLED IN AN INSTANT!

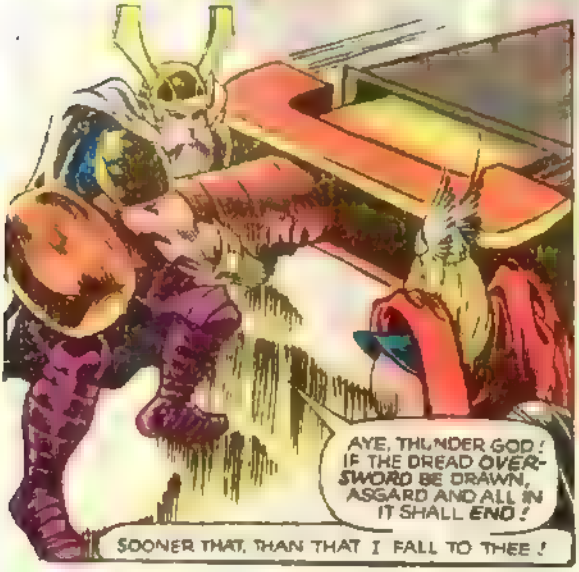


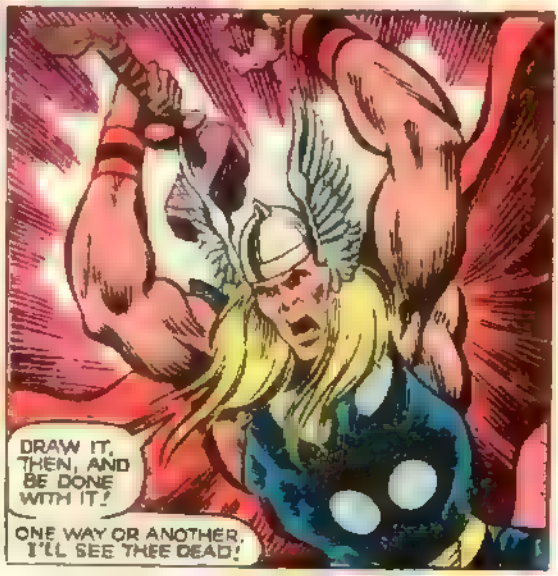



ONWARD, AVENGERS AND ASGARDIANS! THE WAY TO THE THRONE ROOM LIES UNGUARDED BEFORE US!

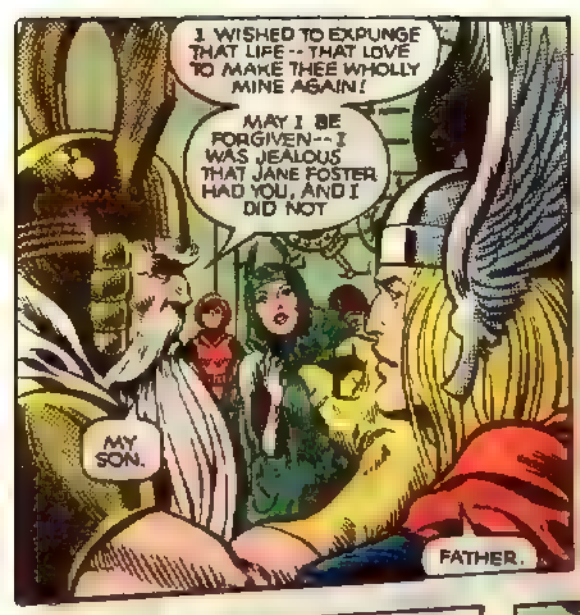
DO WE HAVE TO DO THIS THOR? CAN'T WE LET IRON MAN REST IN PEACE?
NAY, CAPTAIN CRIME MUST BE LAIN AT THE MURDERER'S FEET!

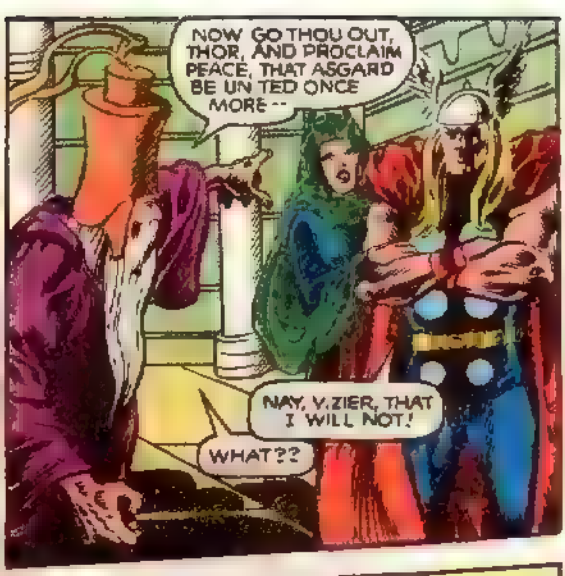
WELL NOW'S OUR CHANCE, AVENGER! THERE HE IS!
NAY! IT CANNOT BE! HE WOULD NOT--!

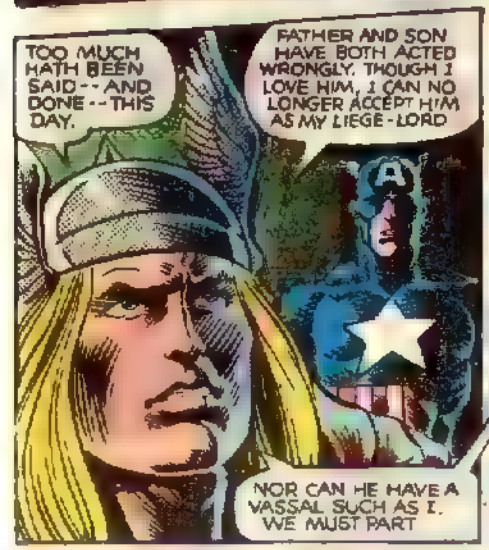

AYE, THUNDER GOD! IF THE DREAD OVER-SWORD BE DRAWN, ASGARD AND ALL IN IT SHALL END!
SOONER THAT, THAN THAT I FALL TO THEE!


DRAW IT, THEN, AND BE DONE WITH IT!
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I'LL SEE THEE DEAD!

STOP THIS INSANITY-- BOTH OF YE !!
VIZIER ! INTERFERE NOT !
NO, THOR ! I'VE JUST SEEN YOU TWO NEARLY DESTROY THE REALM ! AND FOR WHAT ? ME ? YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT ME !
JANE, I--
BY THE FATES, WHAT HAVE I DONE ?
LET THERE BE AN END TO HATRED, AND A BEGINNING TO UNDERSTANDING ! LET US TALK !
FATHER--
I EVER SOUGHT TO BE A SON GOOD AND DUTIFUL ! 'TWAS MY WISH TO PLEASE THEE !
YET HAVE I EVER BEEN MET WITH PUNISHMENT AND IRE, WHILE LOKI WAS FORGIVEN TIME AND AGAIN !
AND WHEN YOU SOUGHT TO STRIP ME OF MY HEARTS DESIRE, IT WAS TOO MUCH !
DO YOU NOT LOVE ME, FATHER ?
I SOUGHT TO MAKE THEE THE BEST OF GODS, EVEN TO SURPASS ME IN TIME ! THUS DID I DISCIPLINE THEE WITHOUT MERCY !
AND YET, THOU WERT MY SON ! I SOUGHT TO KNOW THEE, TO KEEP THEE TO MY BREAST !
WHEN I PUT THEE ON EARTH AS A MORTAL, THOU LIVED A LIFE I COULD KNOW LITTLE OF ! THUS DID THOU BECOME ESTRANGED FROM ME !
THY LOVE FOR JANE FOSTER WAS THE GREATEST PART OF THAT MORTAL LIFE.

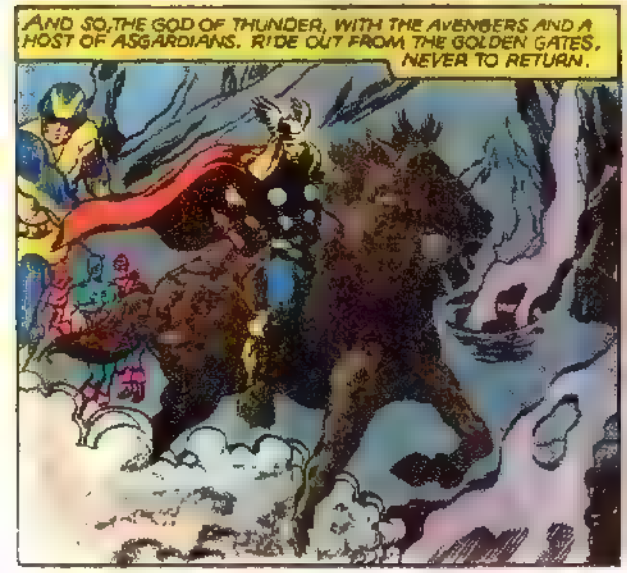

I WISHED TO EXPUNGE THAT LIFE -- THAT LOVE TO MAKE THEE WHOLLY MINE AGAIN!
MAY I BE FORGIVEN -- I WAS JEALOUS THAT JANE FOSTER HAD YOU, AND I DID NOT
MY SON.
FATHER.


NOW GO THOU OUT, THOR, AND PROCLAIM PEACE, THAT ASGARD BE UN TED ONCE MORE --
NAY, VIZIER, THAT I WILL NOT!
WHAT??

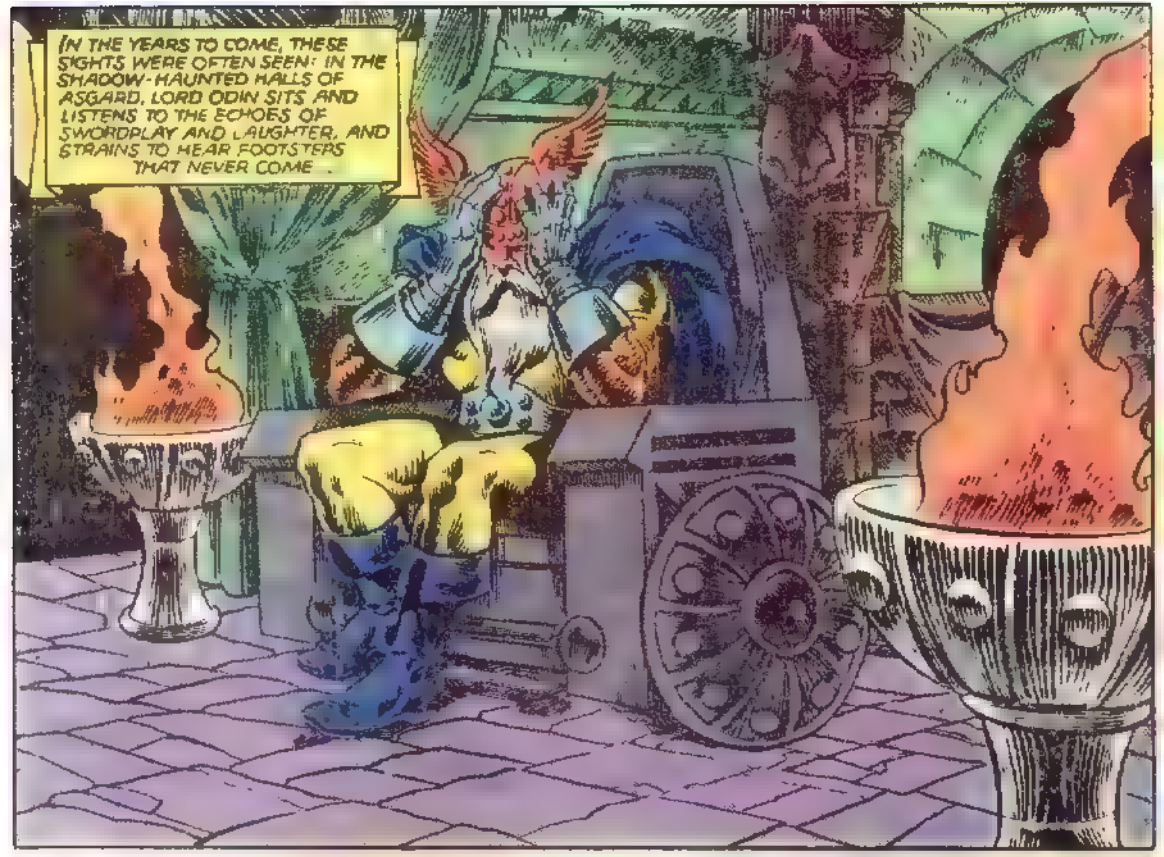

TOO MUCH HATH BEEN SAID -- AND DONE -- THIS DAY.
FATHER AND SON HAVE BOTH ACTED WRONGLY. THOUGH I LOVE HIM, I CAN NO LONGER ACCEPT HIM AS MY LIEGE-LORD
NOR CAN HE HAVE A VASSAL SUCH AS I. WE MUST PART

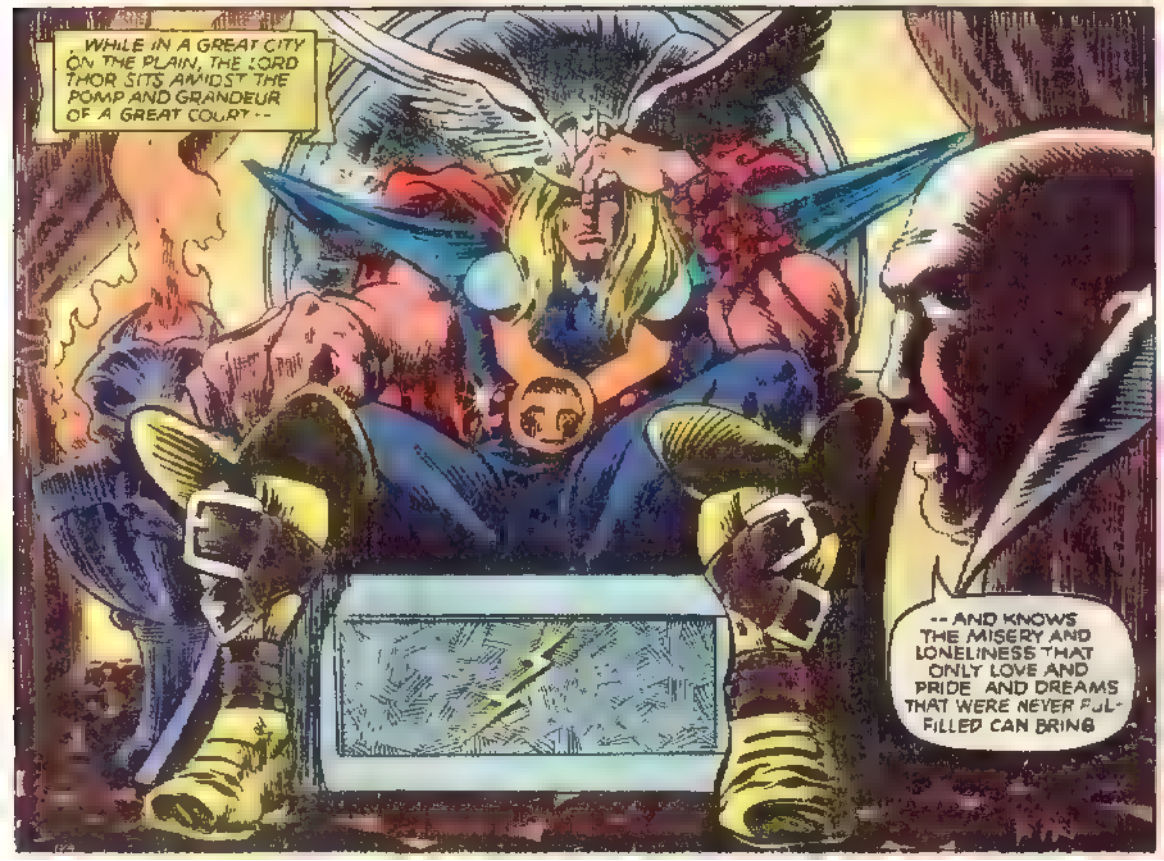
OUR PLACE IS EARTH, OLD FRIEND --!
COME WITH ME, AVENGERS, ON MY JOURNEY
COME -- FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

I DO NOT AGREE WITH THY DECISION, THOR --
-- BUT I ACCEPT IT. GO WITH HONOR


AND SO, THE GOD OF THUNDER, WITH THE AVENGERS AND A HOST OF ASGARDIANS, RIDE OUT FROM THE GOLDEN GATES, NEVER TO RETURN.

WELL, AVENGER, WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW? WILL YOU LIVE HERE? RETURN TO EARTH?
IN THIS LAND I WILL BUILD A CITY FOR MY FOLLOWERS AS FOR THE YEARS TO COME --


IN THE YEARS TO COME, THESE SIGHTS WERE OFTEN SEEN: IN THE SHADOW-HAUNTED HALLS OF ASGARD, LORD ODIN SITS AND LISTENS TO THE ECHOES OF SWORDPLAY AND LAUGHTER, AND STRAINS TO HEAR FOOTSTEPS THAT NEVER COME ..


. WHILE IN A GREAT CITY ON THE PLAIN, THE LORD THOR SITS AMIDST THE POMP AND GRANDEUR OF A GREAT COURT --
-- AND KNOWS THE MISERY AND LONELINESS THAT ONLY LOVE AND PRIDE AND DREAMS THAT WERE NEVER FUL-FILLED CAN BRING

STAN LEE PRESENTS: UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!

I AM THE *WATCHER*. AND THOUGH I SOMETIMES RELATE EVENTS THAT DIVERGE FROM OUR OWN, MY *PRIMARY TASK* IS TO MONITOR THE EARTH OF *OUR* UNIVERSE I HAVE OBSERVED THIS WORLD FROM ITS INFANCY AND I HAVE SEEN ITS HISTORY UNFOLD...

THE FIRST UNI-MIND

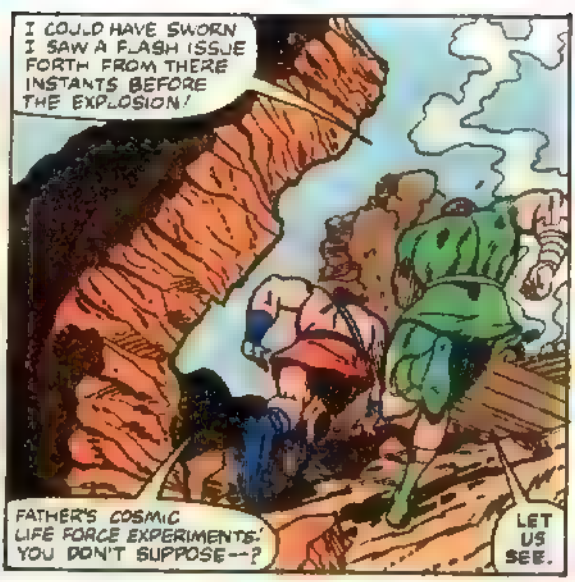
WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, THIS SCENE FROM REMOTEST PRE-HISTORY... THE AWESOME AFTER-MATH OF A GREAT CATACLYSM. MERE MINUTES AGO, THE CITY OF *TITANOS*, HOME OF THE HIGHLY-ADVANCED OFF-SHOOT OF HUMANITY CALLED THE *ETERNALS*, STOOD PROUD AND TALL AMIDST THE POLAR MOUNTAINS. NOW BY FORCES YET UNFATHOMED IT LIES IN SMOLDERING RUIN.

ZURAS, MY BROTHER--WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR CITY? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO *US*?

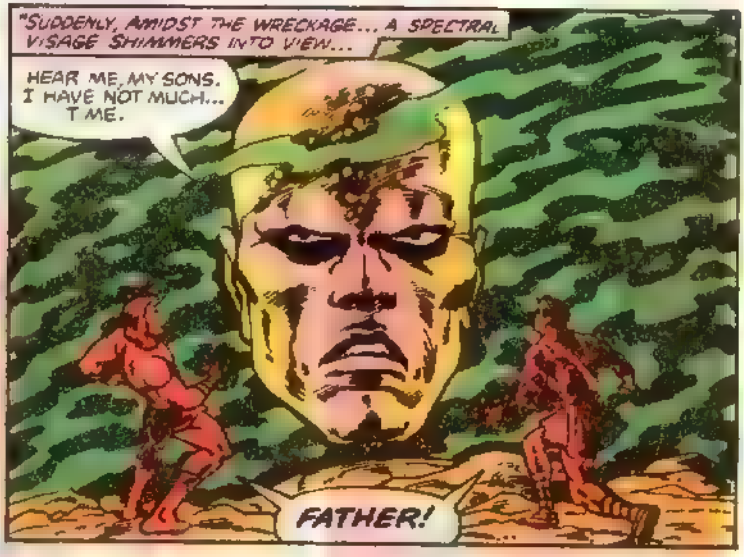
I DON'T KNOW, *ALARS*, BUT THE EXPLOSION HAS LEFT ME FEELING CHANGED SOMEHOW--AS IF IMBUED WITH BOUNDLESS ENERGY!

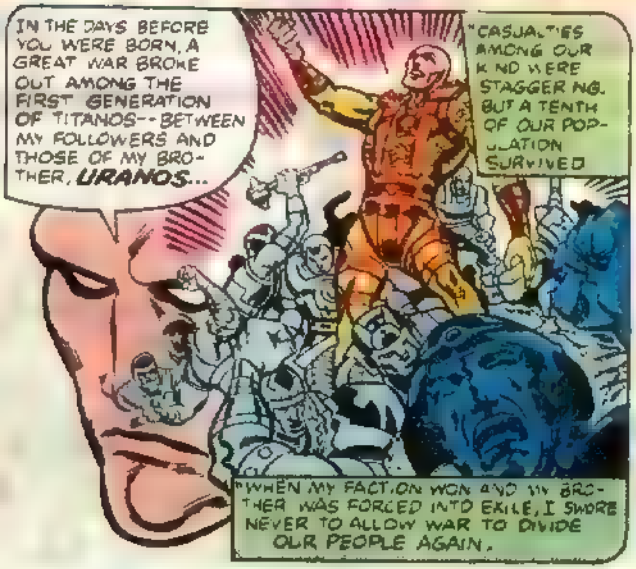
GRUENWALD	WILSON/KUPPERBERG	MORELLI	YOMTOV
WORDS	PICTURES	LETTERS	COLORS

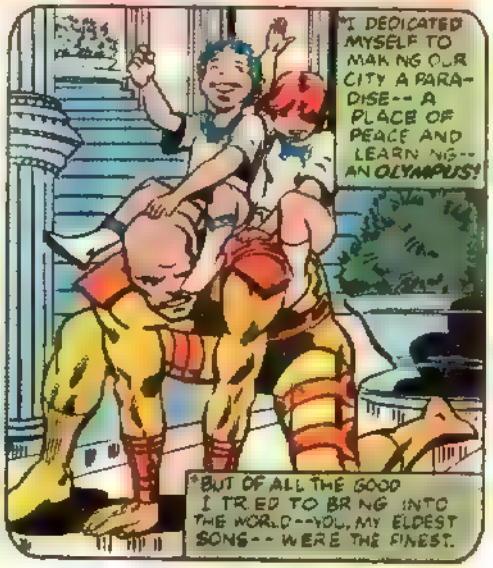
ALTHOUGH THE ENTIRE CITY HAS BEEN LEVELED, I HAVE NOT GLIMPSED A SINGLE CASUALTY! WHAT MANNER OF EXPLOSION COULD HAVE CAUSED SUCH SELECTIVE DAMAGE?
I DON'T KNOW. I WAS FACING FATHER CHRONOS' LABORATORY WHEN THE BLAST OCCURRED.


I COULD HAVE SWORN I SAW A FLASH ISSUE FORTH FROM THERE INSTANTS BEFORE THE EXPLOSION!
FATHER'S COSMIC LIFE FORCE EXPERIMENTS! YOU DON'T SUPPOSE--?
LET US SEE.

SOON...
THE DEVASTATION HERE IS MORE SEVERE THAN ELSEWHERE.
I SEE NO SIGN OF CHRONOS.


"SUDDENLY, AMIDST THE WRECKAGE... A SPECTRAL VISAGE SHIMMERS INTO VIEW...
HEAR ME, MY SONS. I HAVE NOT MUCH... TIME.
FATHER!


IN THE DAYS BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, A GREAT WAR BROKE OUT AMONG THE FIRST GENERATION OF TITANOS--BETWEEN MY FOLLOWERS AND THOSE OF MY BROTHER, URANOS...
"CASUALTIES AMONG OUR KIND WERE STAGGERING. BUT A TENTH OF OUR POPULATION SURVIVED.
"WHEN MY FACTION WON AND MY BROTHER WAS FORCED INTO EXILE, I SWORE NEVER TO ALLOW WAR TO DIVIDE OUR PEOPLE AGAIN.


"I DEDICATED MYSELF TO MAKING OUR CITY A PARADISE--A PLACE OF PEACE AND LEARNING--AN OLYMPUS!
"BUT OF ALL THE GOOD I TRIED TO BRING INTO THE WORLD--YOU, MY ELDEST SONS--WERE THE FINEST.

"WATCHING YOU GROW TO MATURITY I VOWED TO DO ALL IN MY POWER TO SEE THAT NONE OF YOUR GENERATION WOULD EVER KNOW THE MEANING OF DEATH ..
"AND SO I BEGAN TO PROBE THE SECRETS OF LIFE-- THE RIDDLE OF THE COSMOS.
"JUST TODAY I MADE A BREAKTHROUGH I SUCCEEDED IN ISOLATING THE ENERGY SOURCE OF LIFE ITSELF--THE ESSENCE OF IMMORTALITY.
"BUT THE TUBE CONTAINING THE COSMIC FORCE RUPTURED THE MOMENT I GRASPED IT.
"IT WAS THE EXPLOSIVE RELEASE OF THAT INCOMPREHENSIBLE ENERGY THAT DESTROYED OUR CITY. CLOSEST TO THE BLAST, MY CORPOREAL BODY DISINTEGRATED...
BUT EVEN AS MY ATOMS WERE SCATTERED TO INFINITY, MY CONSCIOUSNESS WAS INFUSED WITH LIFE. IN DEATH I HAVE ATTAINED IMMORTALITY.
MOREOVER, THE COSMIC RADIANCE HAS AFFECTED YOU, AND ALL WHO DWELL HERE.
NOW AND FOREVERMORE, OUR KIND SHALL NEVER SUCCUMB TO DEATH WE ARE ETERNAL.
I MUST NOW LEAVE YOU. THE UNIVERSE CALLS. PROMISE ME, MY SONS, TO RULE WISELY IN MY STEAD--NEVER TO LIFT A HAND AGAINST ONE ANOTHER AS I DID AGAINST MY BROTHER.
WE SWEAR.
FAREWELL, ZURAS. ALARS I SHALL BE WITH YOU IN ETERNITY.
WE MUST SUMMON THE MULTITUDE... TELL THEM OF OUR VISION.
SOON, IN THE RUINS OF A GREAT ARENA ..
HEAR US, PEOPLE OF TITANOS. GREAT CHRONOS IS DEAD. BUT IN DYING HE HAS BEQUEATHED US LIFE EVERLASTING. FROM THIS DAY FORTH WE ARE ETERNALS!
WE GATHER HERE TODAY NOT ONLY TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF OUR BENEFACTOR, BUT TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR SPECIES.

NO KINGDOM CAN HAVE MORE THAN ONE KING. THUS WE MUST DECIDE WHICH ONE OF THE HEIRS OF CHRONOS SHALL SUCCEED HIM AS *PRIME ONE*.

BEFORE WE CHOOSE, LET US FIRST JOIN TOGETHER IN THE RITUAL CIRCLE-FLIGHT THAT CHRONOS LOVED SO WELL.

ALMOST IN UNISON THE ASSEMBLED ETERNALS USE THEIR COMMON POWER OF LEVITATION TO RISE...

UNTIL SLOWLY, MAJESTICALLY, THEY VEER TO THEIR RIGHT IN AN AERIAL PROMENADE, MAKING A GRACEFUL ARC THROUGH THE SKY.

THE ARC SWEEPS BACK ON ITSELF FORMING A CIRCLE AROUND THE SONS OF CHRONOS.

ZURAS AND ALARS STAND MOTIONLESS AMIDST THE SPIRAL, CONCENTRATING ON THE COSMIC FORCE THAT COURSES THROUGH THEIR BODIES...

THEN, SUDDENLY, BURSTING MAGNIFICENTLY FROM THEIR FURROWED BROWS--**COSMIC FIRE!**

IT CREEPS DOWN THE LENGTH OF THEIR BODIES...

...UNTIL THEIR ENTIRE CORPOREAL FORMS HAVE BEEN CONVERTED INTO LIVING ENERGY.

LIKE MOTHS TO A FLAME, THE ETERNALS ARE DRAWN, ONE BY ONE, INTO THE COSMIC CONFLAGRATION, THAT HAD BEEN ZURAS AND ALARS...
AND WHEN EACH ETERNAL HAS ADDED HIS OR HER SELF TO THE EVER-EXPANDING SPHERE OF ENERGY--
--AN UTTERLY NEW LIFE FORM EMERGES.
IT IS A GROUP ENTITY... A COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE, A COMMUNAL ORGANISM...
...THE UNI-MIND!
FOR SOME TIME BETWEEN AN INSTANT AND AN EON, THE AWESOME ENTITY FLOATS, CONTEMPLATING ITS EXISTENCE.
IN THE UNI-MIND, ALL ETERNALS ARE OF ONE MIND, ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT.

THEN, HAVING ATTAINED ITS ULTIMATE STATE AND ACHIEVED TOTAL UNITY, THE UNI-MIND BEGINS TO DISINTEGRATE INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS...
AND THE ETERNALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ITS CREATION EMERGE WITH NEW INSIGHTS, NEW PERCEPTIONS, NEW KNOWLEDGE...
FINALLY, THE BRILLIANT BLUE FIRE ITSELF RETREATS INTO THE BODIES OF THE MEN WHO SUMMONED IT...
CHRONOS HAS LEFT US ALL WITH YET ANOTHER LEGACY--THE ABILITY TO MERGE OURSELVES INTO A SINGLE SUPER-INTELLIGENCE.
AND IN THAT STATE, WHAT IS KNOWN BY ONE IS KNOWN TO ALL. IT IS THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY THAT YOU, ZURAS, BECOME CHRONOS' SUCCESSOR. SO BE IT!
I KNOW NOW THAT OUR PROGRAMS FOR POSTERITY ARE FAR TOO DISSIMILAR TO PEACEABLY COEXIST, ZURAS. SO TO PREVENT THE DISUNITY WE SWORE TO CHRONOS WE WOULD AVOID--
I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU ALL.
PERHAPS AMONG THE STARS I SHALL REALIZE MY OWN DESTINY.
FAREWELL, ALARS! YOU ARE A GOOD AND NOBLE BEING--NOBLER PERHAPS THAN I WOULD BE IN YOUR POSITION.
MAY YOU FIND PEACE.
COME, MY PEOPLE... THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE.
END.

AND SO IT COMES TO PASS, THAT ON THE PLAINS OF ASGARD, AN AWESOME TABLEAU IS FORMED: ON THE ONE SIDE, THE FORCES OF THOR THE MIGHTY, WITH THE VALIANT AVENGERS ALONGSIDE--

--WHILE FACING THEM STAND LOKI AND THE FORCES OF ODIN, GIRDLED FOR A CLASH OF TITANS TO RIVAL RAGNAROK IN ITS ENORMITY, AND ITS BITTER SAVAGERY!